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SOME DATA ON USSR SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITIONS AS OF MAY 1951

/Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources/

Armenian SSR

An expedition of "Agrolesproyekt" of the Ministry of Forestry USSR has arrived in Yerevan from Moscow.

According to its head, Engineer M. Koshelyayev, the expedition this year is composed of 60 engineers -- foresters, soil scientists, geobotanists, hydrogeologists, and other specialists. It will continue the study begun last year of soil erosion on the mountain slopes in the Sevan Lake basin covering an area of 100,000 hectares. Measures to eliminate soil erosion on these slopes will be developed.

A careful study will be made of nine Armenian rivers. On the basis of this study of their basins, the expedition will develop plans for creating forest plantings and simple hydroengineering installations. If these plans are carried out, the rapidity of flow of spring waters will be slowed and soil erosion reduced. A great deal of work on this is also to be done on the mountainous slopes of the Gedar River basin.

A careful study of natural conditions will permit plans to be made for continuing the creation of a green ring of forest plantings around the city of Yerevan.

All this work will be carried out jointly with the scientists of Armenia. (1)

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Kazakh SSR

A detachment of an Academy of Sciences USSR expedition has been working for more than a year near Dzhanybek in West Kazakhstan Oblast. Scientists from Moscow and Leningrad are carrying on interesting experiments and research connected with the problem of growing shelter belts and sowing grasses under the difficult conditions prevailing in the Caspian Lowland.

Prof A. A. Rode, Doctor of Agricultural Sciences and head of the Dzhanybek detachment, gave this newspaper's correspondent the following statement:

Solonets soils occupy a large part of the northwestern portion of the Caspian Lowland. The detachment's task is to develop a method of growing shelter belts on these soils under the arid climatic conditions which prevail there. Land improvement is the first approach toward solving this problem. Last year, we carried out deep plowing on a small area, held the snow, and planted such comparatively salt-tolerating species as oleaster, small-leaf elm, tamarisk, and Tatar honeysuckle. These plantings will hold the snow in a natural manner and a result will be further dispersal of the salt in the soil. Then, after several years, it will be possible to create the basic tree plantings.

The detachment is also studying climate, ground water, and soils. Geobotanists are studying vegetation and the root systems of plants. Zoologists are developing methods of combating rodents and insects. A group headed by Prof I. V. Larin is studying the problem of growing grasses for the purpose of establishing a feed base.

The work of the Dzhanybek detachment will continue for a number of years. (2)

Turkmen SSR

Three detachments of the Aral-Caspian Expedition of the Academy of Sciences USSR under the supervision of N. N. Pel't and a detachment of soil scientists of the Academy of Sciences Uzbek SSR, headed by S. A. Shuvalov, have arrived in Kizyl-Atrek.

The scientists will study the subtropical plants which grow in the Kizyl-Atrek area so that the best of them may be chosen for plantings in connection with the Main Turkmen Canal. At present, they are studying the soils and vegetation of the Meshet-Misserianskaya Lowland.(3)

Along the route where the Main Turkmen Canal will be built, an expedition of the All-Union Agrophysical Scientific Research Institute of the Academy of Agricultural Sciences imeni V. I. Lenin is at work. The scientists have carried out the first experiments in fixing shifting sands with the aid of a bitumen emulsion.

The supervisor of the work, N. G. Zakharov, Candidate in Agricultural Sciences, made the following statement to a Tass correspondent:

The Kara-Kum, through which the route of the Main Turkmen Canal passes, is poor in vegetation. This is so because in early spring the roots of vegetation blow away with the sand.

Soviet scientists have shown that one of the most effective methods of fixing shifting sands is the application of a bitumen emulsion to the sands. In the area where the Takhia-Tash hydraulic installation will be built, a quarter-hectare plot of sand was treated with bitumen emulsion. The crust which formed after application fixed the sands even in the face of hurricanes. The young shoots of plants are easily able to pierce the thin layer of bitumen. The plot treated with bitumen is now covered with shoots of plants.(4)

SOURCES

1. Yerevan, Kommunist, 26 May 51
2. Alma-Ata, Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 29 May 51
3. Ashkhabad, Turkmenskaya Iskra, 19 May 51
4. Tbilisi, Zarya Vostoka, 19 May 51

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